

Message Text

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41

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TAGS: PFOR PINT IN NP

SUBJ: INDIA, NEPAL AGREE ON SIMPLIFIED PERMIT SYSTEM

REF: KATHMANDU 4535

1. NEPAL AND INDIA DECEMBER 2 ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT ON A NEW SYSTEM TO SIMPLIFY THE ISSUANCE OF TRAVEL PERMITS REQUIRED FOR NEPALIS ENTERING INDIA FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN NEPAL. TEN BORDER POINTS ARE TO ESTABLISHED, SIX IN THE EAST AND FOUR IN THE WEST, AT WHICH PERMITS WILL BE ISSUED VALID FOR 15 DAYS. IN ADDITION NEPALIS LIVING WITHIN A TEN KILOMETER ZONE CONTIGUOUS TO THE BORDER WILL BE ALLOWED MULTIPLE ENTRY PERMITS VALID FOR SIX MONTHS. THESE SPECIAL PERMITS, HOWEVER, WILL ALLOW THE BEARER TO TRAVEL ONLY WITHIN A TEN KILOMETER AREA WITHIN INDIA "TO ALLEVIATE HARDSHIPS ON THOS WHO COMMUTE TO PURCHASE DAILY NECESSITIES OR TO EARN A LIVLIHOOD ON A CASUAL BASIS" IN INDIA. ONE YEAR MULTIPLE ENTRY CARDS WILL BE ISSUED TO NEPALESE PURSUING STUDIES AT A RECOGNIZED INSTITUTION WITHIN RESTRICTED AREAS OF INDIA (PRIMARILY SCHOOLS IN DARJEELING). MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE PREVIOUS REQUIREMENT THAT PHOTOGRAPHS ACCOMPANY AN APPLICATION HAS NOW BEENDROPPED.

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2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET TALKED TO CONCERNED OFFICIALS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL OF NEPAL'S REQUESTS HAVE BEEN MET. THE NEW SYSTEM SHOULD SIMPLIFY THE PROCEDURE TO THE POINT THAT NEPALIS RESIDING IN THE FAR EAST AND WESTERN DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTRY WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO PRACTICE TRADITIONAL TRADE AND TO MOVE FROM ONE POINT IN NEPAL TO ANOTHER WHILE TRANSITING INDIAN TERRITORY. AT THE SAME TIME THE LIMIT OF FIFTEEN DAYS PER VISIT WILL SATISFY INDIAN DEMANDS THAT MIGRATORY NEPALESE WORKERS WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM REMAINING IN DARJEELING, SIKKIM AND WEST BENGAL. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW WELL THE NEW AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED BY LOCAL INDIAN POLICE AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS WHO HAVE CONSIDERABLE POWER TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR THOSE CROSSING IN AND OUT OF INDIA. BUT ON PAPER, AT LEAST, THE AGREEMENT SHOULD REMOVE MANY OF THE OBSTACLES CREATED BY THE NEW REGULATIONS PROMULGATED IN AUGUST.

MAYTAG

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